

Impact Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation (IMPACT)

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FINAL REPORT

Submitted To:

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I. Executive summary

Managing for results is a key element of the USAID management system. Doing so requires timely, accurate, and relevant information about RCSA activities. RCSA designed the IMPACT project to provide part of that information.

Aurora Associates met those needs by: 1) working very closely with the SO teams to establish achievable goals, targets, and objectives, and then placing those indicators in a useable Performance Management Plan, 2) being as responsive to the full range of RCSA's needs in terms of managing for results as possible, and 3) developing a sustainable system that, given aggressive management, will yield continuing results.

The Aurora Associates team approach works. We combine Southern Africans and Americans in an effective and economical mixture that provides the combination of local knowledge, management skill, and policy understanding that produces concrete results. The activity conducted during the period, January 1998 – June 2004, is leaving behind significant “results based management” capacity with RCSA, local and regional grantees and other institutions that will contribute to sustainable economic growth of Southern Africa.

In managing the IMPACT project, Aurora Associates International, Inc. emphasized three qualities: 1) responsiveness, 2) reliability, and 3) systems development.

1. **Responsiveness.** RCSA called, IMPACT responded. For example on 30 days notice IMPACT provided everything RCSA needed to conduct the highly successful FY 2004 scheduling conference.
2. **Reliability.** IMPACT provided all deliverables and then went well beyond what the contract required.
3. **System Development.** Working closely with the SO teams, RCSA partners, and regional consultants IMPACT significantly furthered the development of monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of implementation.

The major activities completed by Aurora under this contract are:

- Built the M&E system using an inclusive approach, which involved SO teams, partners, contractors, grantees, and regional consulting firms.
- Prepared the Performance Monitoring Plans, semi annual results reviews; and other reports for the annual reports In conjunction with the SO teams;
- Collected data, completed forms, and drafted sections of the Results Review and Resource Request (R4);
- Conducted research on regional economic and social conditions including trade data reports, agriculture surveys; D&G survey reports; expert focus groups; natural resource management; and data quality assessments.
- Prepared a guidebook on Impact Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation for RCSA;

- Published a quarterly Regional Economic Review newsletter that was distributed electronically to more than 100 recipients including bilateral missions
- Organized a number of workshops and training sessions
- Conducted an assessment of RCSA's Strategic Objectives for the full strategy period, 1997-2003.

II. Recommendations

RCSA officers have a tendency to think of Monitoring and Evaluation as just one extra item on a Washington checklist. For RCSA to be fully effective in implementing its activities, M&E needs to be an integral part of the implementation process. Providing information throughout the strategic cycle that allows RCSA to know where it stands, identifies both progress and problems, and provides the basis for taking corrective action.

- 1) Build monitoring and evaluation into the RCSA implementation system from the base established by IMPACT and PPDO. Expand that system to actively engage both contractors and grantees in the M&E process not only by reporting at the end of the year but throughout the year so that problems are quickly identified and corrective action promptly initiated.
- 2) Using a contractor provides RCSA with flexibility it will not have if it attempts to do M&E in house. One of the things that made the IMPACT project effective was our ability to quickly mobilize assets to obtain the desired information. If needed, we could engage a firm in the region and have them at work within 15 days. RCSA will never be able to match that agility.
- 3) Ground truthing needs to be an integral part of the system. That is responsible officers need to regularly visit the activities, talk at length with the implementing agent, and then visit the actual field sites. Given USAID onerous regulatory requirements and the declining number of direct hire officers available to meet those requirements it is unlikely that in-house RCSA officers will have the time to provide the essential.
- 4) Unfailingly hold Semi Annual Results Reviews. Involve contractors and grantees in those reviews. Based on the SARR meeting develop a list of actions to take place following those reviews and then follow up on no less than a monthly basis to ensure that the SO team completes those actions.

III. Background on Managing for Results

Managing for results is a key element of the USAID management system. Doing so requires timely, accurate, and relevant information about RCSA activities. RCSA proposed the initial IMPACT project in the early 1990s as one of the fundamental building blocks in managing for results. RCSA designed the IMPACT project to provide part of the required information.

RCSA selected Aurora Associates to implement the IMPACT project in mid 1997. Aurora Associates and RCSA signed the contract on signed January 7, 1998; however, a purchase order in October 1, 1997 started mobilization activities. The part time Chief of Party, initially based in South Africa, began to mobilize the IMPACT team. The Chief of Party normally spent three days a week in Botswana. Aurora Associates quickly mobilized the IMPACT team with the Deputy Chief of Party/ Monitoring Evaluation specialist arriving in February 1998. Recruitment of two secretaries, a finance/administration officer, a research specialist, a social scientist and an economist – senior policy advisor, quickly followed his arrival.

In 1998, Aurora Associates observed and RCSA agreed that the part time arrangement for Chief of Party was not an optimal working arrangement. Aurora Associates then recruited a new full time Chief of Party who arrived in early 1999. For personal reasons this individual departed in the fall of 1999. The third and current Chief of Party arrived on March 25, 2000. An important quality of the IMPACT team is that the core team served for the entire project

The IMPACT team organized itself so that one member of the IMPACT team served on each of the RCSA strategic and special objective teams. Initially the social scientists served on SO1 (D&G) and SPO – A (transboundary natural resources management), the Economist on SO2 (Trade/Investment), the M&E specialist on SO 3 (agriculture/natural resources). In early 2000 RCSA decided to change SPO –A into a full-blown strategic objective.

Early in the project some SO teams were resistant to IMPACT performing the M&E function because historically this is a function that USAID does in-house. However, persistent effort by the IMPACT team in demonstrating the benefits of the project, both in terms of professional M&E competence and in work flexibility ultimately won them over.

The one major mishap in the project was the fire of January 2002. The electrical fire started at around midnight above the IMPACT offices but burnt through to our boardroom. Actual fire destruction was largely confined to the conference room; however, fire damage rendered the IMPACT computers and most other electronic equipment unusable. Fortunately, quick work by the IMPACT staff saved most of the files. We were also able to retrieve most of the electronic data from the computers.

RCSA was very helpful in loaning IMPACT two offices at the RCSA compound. Thus, we were still able to meet all requirements even as we searched for a new office, purchased new equipment, and cleaned up the files. We quickly found temporary quarters although finding

satisfactory new quarters proved difficult so when our ordinal landlord offered to rebuild to our satisfaction we accepted. It took approximately three months to re-enter our initial offices.

The RCSA strategic plan covered three strategic objectives and two special objectives. Special Objective B (*Create capacity for more informed regional decision making*) was the initial financing mechanism for the IMPACT project. When, in 2000, RCSA changed Special Objective A into a full-blown strategic objective, it also abolished Special Objective B. RCSA provided funding for IMPACT equally (25% each) from each of the strategic objectives.

Initially RCSA designed the STRENGTH project to develop the institutional capacity of NGOs receiving grants from RCSA. STRENGTH was supposed to get the activity level results. In 2002 with the departure of STRENGTH, IMPACT assumed part of that role.

Strategic Objectives 1997 to 2003. Initially the objectives were:

SO1. Increased regional capacity to influence democratic performance

SO2. A more integrated regional market.

SO3 Accelerated regional adoption of sustainable agriculture and natural management approaches. (Split into two in 2000)

Special Objective A: Increased regional capacity to manage transboundary natural resources.

Special Objective B: Create capacity for more informed regional decision-making.

IV. Project Deliverables

There are ten deliverables in the Aurora Associates contract. The completion date of each is listed below. All deliverables have been provided. Following the listing of the ten deliverables is a more detailed explanation as to the process whereby IMPACT provided the deliverable.

Task #1: The Contractor shall deliver a Performance and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting System and Implementation Plan for RCSA

Initially completed in 1999. IMPACT worked with the SO Teams and the Program office to mutually acceptable set of indicators, established the baseline values, set targets and developed methodologies for acquiring the data. In addition, IMPACT worked with Program Office to establish a semi-annual

In 2000 the NETCAB strategy and work plan did not fit with the SO3 PMP, consequently, their results were not contributing to the annual report. IMPACT worked with NETCAB, changed their activity focus, revised their PMP, and they became a star in following R4s. In particular, the ZIMOZA trans-boundary natural resource management area was a major success story for RCSA.

performance review system and developed the guidelines for preparing and holding a semi-annual results review (SARR). IMPACT completed the first PMP at that time as well.

Task #2: The Contractor shall complete a draft of the results review section for each annual Results Review and Resource Request (R4) report.

From 1998 through 2002, IMPACT prepared the initial draft of the R4 results review section. In 2003 and 2004 in response to a change of direction from PPDO, IMPACT provided the data, completed most of the tables and up dated the PMPs. We also provided bullets of what we viewed as the critical achievements

Task #3: The Contractor shall deliver technical services to the RCSA SO and SPO teams and implementing partners.

IMPACT team members served as ex official members of each SO team providing technical service in development of performance indicators and assessment of data quality. In conjunction with the SO teams, IMPACT prepared PMPs, material for the annual report, and SARRS.

Task #4: The Contractor shall deliver a draft work plan for the second year and for each subsequent year of the contract.

IMPACT provided the initial work plan in May 1998 and provided further workplans in May 1999, May 2000, and July 2001. The work plans for the two extensions were part of the extension requests of June 2002 and February 2004. IMPACT, at the request of PPDO, changed the timing of work plans to meet the Agency's annual reporting cycle.

Task #5: The Contractor shall deliver a guidebook on RCSA Impact Assessment, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Four Corners transboundary natural resource management area activity managed by AWF got off to a very slow start in 2001. RCSA was on the verge of axing AWF for non-performance. In 2002, SO 12 asked IMPACT to take the case. We spent a week on site helping AWF to focus their efforts on priority activities and developing an achievable work plan. We followed up during the course of the next year. In 2003, AWF met 70% of their targets.

IMPACT delivered the guidebook on December 2000. The primary distribution of the guidebook was to RCSA partner institutions participating in IMPACT organized "Managing for Results" Workshops. The workshops trained regional NGOs implementing RCSA funded activities. Distributing the guidebooks through the workshops allowed the NGOs to become familiar with using the guidebook while working with the IMPACT staff; thus, they could immediately see its relevance to their work.

Task #6: The Contractor shall deliver topical research on regional social and economic conditions as requested by the COTR.

Aurora conducted topical research in a number of areas and provided reports to RCSA. They include: Economic Quarterlies, Trade Data reports, Agriculture Survey report, D&G NGO survey report, Expert focus groups on the status of D&G, Trade and Investment; Natural Resource Management, and Agriculture in southern Africa, and Data quality assessments.

Task #7: The Contractor shall produce short informational reports on RCSA's program impact as may be requested by the COTR.

IMPACT provided numerous informational reports on Democracy and Governance; Natural Resource Management; and Agriculture. Aurora also provided RCSA with reports and training materials on monitoring and evaluation, such as Monitoring for Results; Introduction to Results Frameworks; M&E Concepts and Roles; Participatory M&E Workshop; and Gender Workshop. Aurora provided an electronic copy of these reports to the COTR at the end of the project. A list of the reports provided to RCSA is attached, see *Appendix 2*.

Task #8: The Contractor shall arrange and provide for all logistic support for workshops and conferences, within the parameters as defined by the budget, as may be requested by the COTR.

In October 2003, RCSA was having difficulty arranging for its joint scheduling conference with REDSO/EA. They turned to IMPACT for assistance. Within a month, IMPACT had completed arrangements that met all of RCSA's requirements. The conference was a major success.

See attached list of conferences, seminars, and focus groups, *Appendix 1*. Note that in 2002 the contract changed from listing a specific quantitative target to, at the request of CTO, IMPACT will provide up to six conferences and workshops per year.

Task #9: The Contractor shall submit a final report within ninety days after the end of the contract summarizing the major results and highlighting any actions required to ensure sustainability of systems developed.

A preliminary draft of the Final Report was provided to the COTR for comments during the last week of the project by the Chief of Party. After discussions with the COTR, an electronic copy of the draft Final Report was submitted to COTR.

Task #10: The Contractor shall deliver Performance Monitoring Reports, which summarize progress of the major activities in process in relation to the requirements of the contract.

Throughout the contract period IMPACT provided performance monitoring reports covering each strategic objective and most of the major RCSA partners.

A detailed explanation of work done under each Task is given below.

Task #1: The Contractor shall deliver a Performance and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting System and Implementation Plan for RCSA.

In fulfilling task #1 IMPACT went through a number of steps. First, in 1998 we prepared the basic Performance and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting System and Implementation Plan for RCSA. IMPACT periodically updated the PMPs to meet the developing needs of RCSA.

Second, also in 1998, IMPACT prepared a customer service plan to ensure that RCSA was delivering what its customers want and need. Information gathering to prepare the service plan indicated that, in general, the customers were unsure of what their true needs. Thus, IMPACT throughout the course of the project, made a point of continually assessing those needs and then responding accordingly. The needs change over time. IMPACT changed to meet those needs. What we found was that contractors were relatively well prepared to use Monitoring and Evaluation as a guide to implementation. Contrastingly, grantees, while seeing the value of M&E, often initially found it an unwanted intrusion, and when IMPACT overcame this inhibition, did not know how to fit M&E into their implementation process.

Third, as a basic step in system development, in 1999, IMPACT drafted and distributed M&E guidebooks. The guidebooks provide a southern African user-friendly introduction to the USAID M&E system. It takes potential users through the steps necessary to use the system, showing them how to meet USAID reporting requirements; more efficiently design their own activities, and, most critically, how to use the system to implement their activities more effectively. Over 200 individuals and organizations received guidebooks.

Fourth, IMPACT worked closely with SO teams to develop PMPs. Again, this was not a one-time activity but something IMPACT did throughout the entire time of the contract. The process started with careful selection of goals, targets, and objectives. The selection process was subject to the rigorous logic USAID uses in matrix approach to program design. The team then placed the indicators within the context of the Performance Management Plan. IMPACT, working with the SO teams, updated the plans yearly, normally in conjunction with the annual report.

Fifth, IMPACT, where requested by RCSA, worked closely with selected RCSA partners, to develop PMPs as part of the partners overall work plans. This included the HUB, DAI, and IUCN/ROSA. We followed the same basic process as outlined in four above.

Sixth, at every workshop involving IMPACT, we held at least one session on how to use monitoring and evaluation as part of the partner's activity implementation. We found that this subject requires constant repetition. We also found that the partners would make a significant effort to use the system come up with new questions.

Seventh, IMPACT established system of data collection based on RCSA's partners to provide the data needed for the annual report. In addition to RCSA's partners, IMPACT also contracted with several firms in the region to provide basic trade and economic data. This network was

successful in providing pre-publication data that was available within six to twelve months of the end of the fiscal year. Published data usually lags from two to three year's minimum. An advantage of this approach is that IMPACT was able to show that AGOA was increasing trade in the region within one year of the start of the program. We also showed decreased in trade transit times along the Trans Kalahari and Dar Es Lam corridors.

Eight, IMPACT conducted periodic data quality assessment exercises to assure that data quality was adequate. IMPACT also conducted activity specific surveys to compare tested performance versus claimed performance. For example, the study on crop yields with SMIP and SARRNET. See below for details on this process.

Ninth, working with PPDO, IMPACT conducted Semi Annual Results Reviews. That is each Strategic Objective team prepared a memo outlining its progress in meeting its indicators. Often IMPACT, normally in conjunction with annual report preparation, assisted in preparation of the review memo. Following the SARR meeting, IMPACT normally prepared a list of actions the SO team was to complete before the next SARR.

Task #2: The Contractor shall complete a draft of the results review section for each annual Results Review and Resource Request (R4) report.

See one (1) above for how the system functions. IMPACT has adapted its approach to RCSA's changing needs. Initially we provided a complete draft of the results review section. In the past two years, RCSA decided their needs would be better served by Aurora Associates providing the data, completing many of the forms and updating the PMPs.

Task #3: The Contractor shall deliver technical services to the RCSA SO and SPO teams and implementing partners.

An IMPACT team member typically served as an ex official member of each SO team. In conjunction with their work with the teams, IMPACT prepared PMPs, material for the annual report, and semi annual results reviews. They served as in-house experts on M&E.

Task #4: The Contractor shall deliver a draft work plan for the second year and for each subsequent year of the contract.

IMPACT provided the initial work plan in May 1997 and provided further workplans in May 1998, May 1999, May 2000, and July 2001. The work plans for the two extensions were part of the extension requests of February 2004 and June 2002. IMPACT, at the request of PPDO, changed the timing of work plans to meet PPDO's requirements.

Task #5: The Contractor shall deliver a guidebook on RCSA Impact Assessment, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.

Aurora prepared such a guidebook and delivered it to RCSA. See Task #1 above for an explanation of how the guidebook fits into the overall monitoring and evaluation system.

Task #6: The Contractor shall deliver topical research on regional social and economic conditions as requested by the COTR.

Aurora conducted research on a number of regional social and economic topics and provided reports on them to RCSA. In addition to Aurora published a quarterly newsletter, the Regional Economic Review.

Illustrative of topical research is the work IMPACT completed for SO13 on food security. The data demonstrates significant impact. This appropriately rigorous scientific survey has provided RCSA with even stronger proof of the contributions of the two programs. IMPACT provided professional input to the design and implementation process through its three Statisticians (Joseph Mwangi, Killy Sichinga and Judith Nawa) and the Chief of Party (Norman Olsen). This team continuously worked with SMIP economist (Dr David Rohrbach) and SARRNET scientist (Dr Sicco Klijin) and SARRNET economist (Sella Jumbo). Crop scientists and other professionals from the two programs, collaborating governments, universities and research institutes joined the team during the field phase. Fieldwork commenced in Zimbabwe on May 14, in Malawi on June 4 and in Tanzania on July 8, 2003. We completed the Zimbabwe survey on June 15 while Malawi fieldwork ended on June 28. We completed fieldwork in Tanzania on July 7, 2003. IMPACT, SMIP and SARRNET staff and program partners from government participated throughout all phases of the survey. Data collection methods included farmer interviews, field observation, area measurement, weighing and crop cutting. The combined team collected data from 1868 households covering 40 administrative districts within the three SADC countries. The survey also interviewed industry managers, commercial farmers, traders, village cooperative groups and vendors. To give a complete picture of the activities we collected unstructured qualitative data on processing technologies, marketing and other issues related to commercialisation or food aid.

Some of the results are:

- a. The contribution to food aid through yield gain is approximately \$91 million a very significant contribution in reduction of food aid.
- b. Incomes for adopting households are higher than non-adopters by over 15%.
- c. Those rural households who have adopted new varieties are more food secure than those not adopting the new varieties.
- d. Seventeen percent of cassava new varieties adopters are now participating in commercial activities by providing raw materials to industry.
- e. Further increase in yield and production is constrained by inadequacy of technology in disease and pest control, storage, processing and transportation.
- f. The role of sorghum, pearl millet, cassava and sweet potatoes is very important in southern Africa as the four crops contribute one third of the daily-required kilocalories.

Task #7: The Contractor shall produce short informational reports on RCSA's program impact as may be requested by the COTR.

Illustrative of IMPACT's work in this regard are the focus groups conducted by IMPACT to assist RCSA in preparation of its new 2004 to 2012 strategy. Following a highly successful D&G workshop in July 2002, RCSA asked Aurora Associates to assist in the preparations for the new strategy by conducting focus groups that would show trends in the basic sectors of interest to RCSA, solicit the views of RCSA's partners as to effective strategies, and develop some initial scenarios for the potential development of each sector.

IMPACT supported RCSA's strategy planning exercise by holding three focus groups (1) Economics, trade, and investment, 2) Natural Resource Management, and 3) Agriculture to support RCSA's strategy planning exercise. IMPACT based the operation plan on the D&G workshop model. IMPACT contracted with outside southern African experts to prepared papers on basic trends in Democracy/Governance, Economics, trade and investment, Environment/Natural Resource Management, Agriculture, and Conflict Vulnerability. In addition, IMPACT's Economic Policy Adviser produced two resource papers for the RCSA strategy review process: "Options for Regional HIV/AIDS Interventions in the SADC Region" and "Economic Trends in Southern Africa and Priority Issues Facing the Region." IMPACT's Economic Policy Adviser produced two resource papers for the RCSA strategy review process: "Options for Regional HIV/AIDS Interventions in the SADC Region" and "Economic Trends in Southern Africa and Priority Issues Facing the Region."

The focus groups consisted of from 8 to 20 experts in the specific sectoral field. They met for a one-day session in Gaborone, reviewed a discussion paper covering the basic aspects of the sector, and then discussed the overall direction of the sector with an emphasis on identifying potential strategic options for advancing the development of that sector.

Trends papers were prepared on Democracy/Governance, Economics, Natural Resources Management, Agriculture, and Conflict Vulnerability. In addition, these papers included potential scenarios for the development of the sector. The focus group reviewed the papers and agreed they represent an accurate analysis of basic trends. Following completion of each focus group the Chief of Party drafted a synopsis of each sector based on the papers and focus group discussions. Each synopsis included a summary of basic trends and issues, scenarios and potential strategic options for RCSA.

IMPACT is pleased to note that RCSA's final strategy clearly reflected the work of the focus groups. For example, the D&G group while advocating the continuation of work to promote electoral competition also suggested that RCSA give added emphasis to anti-corruption activities. The economics, trade and investment group candidly acknowledged that most southern African products are not competitive on the world market; they recommended continued efforts to increase competitiveness. Both the Environment/Natural Resources and Agriculture groups stated the critical problem facing their sectors is water management. In its new strategy, RCSA is emphasizing each of these areas.

Task #8: The Contractor shall arrange and provide for all logistic support for workshops and conferences, within the parameters as defined by the budget, as may be requested by the COTR.

Illustrative of IMPACT's success in supporting RCSA in conducting conferences is the November RCSA/REDSO scheduling conference. IMPACT, working closely with PPDO began preparations to assist RCSA in hosting a programming/scheduling conference of east and southern Africa mission in the first quarter of FY 04. Initially RCSA planned to conduct the conference entirely on its own but they ran into difficulties and called IMPACT for help. RCSA's requirements were for hotel and conference facilities within 30 minutes of the Johannesburg airport. Given the timing of the event during the South African Christmas convention season this was a difficult task.

By forming an exceptional integrated team with RCSA, REDSO, and Aurora Associates/South Africa, IMPACT assisted PPDO in successfully hosting the USAID programming/scheduling conference for USAID east and southern Africa missions from November 12, 13, and 14 at Caesars in Johannesburg. In their evaluation of the conference, participants stated this was the most successful programming/scheduling conference they had attended. Participants rated the logistics, provided by Aurora Associates, as flawless. As one participant stated, "everything, even special requests, was always there when it was needed".

- Secured 65 hotel rooms within 15 minutes of the airport. Given the timing of the event during the South African Christmas convention season Caesars was the only hotel within easy reach of the airport that could provide the rooms. Aurora Associates was also successful in negotiating a group rate that was within USAID per diem rates.
- Provided computers, photocopying, e-mail, and internet.
- Provided, on three days notice, verbatim transcripts of the conference
- Provided conference materials. Used a "make your own binder" system in which each participant received basic materials and then each day was able to add to it additional materials from the conference. This saved some photocopying and added to the usability of the materials selected by each participant.
- Provided such extras as emergency medical services (arranged for a root canal and crown replacement), shopping trips to nearby malls, and help in arranging onward transportation.

Task #9: Prepare Final Report: The Contractor shall submit a final report within ninety days after the end of the contract summarizing the major results and highlighting any actions required to ensure sustainability of systems developed.

A preliminary draft of the Final Report was provided to the COTR for comments during the last week of the project by the Chief of Party. After discussions with the COTR, the draft was finalized and an electronic copy of the Final Report was submitted to COTR.

Task #10: The Contractor shall deliver Performance Monitoring Reports, which summarize progress of the major activities in process in relation to the requirements of the contract.

In the fall of 2004, RCSA requested IMPACT assess progress in each of the strategic objectives for the full strategy period. These assessments illustrate the type of progress reporting done by IMPACT.

IMPACT carried out preliminary strategic assessments for all programs in the RCSA 1997-2003 CSP. The objectives of the assessments were:

- i. To provide life of program information for use in assessing program performance in the annual report.
- ii. To prepare for closeout.
- iii. To provide information for use by the design teams

SO1: IMPACT drafted an assessment of the impact of SO 1 on the growth of democracy and democratic institutions in southern Africa. We concluded that the SO1 program had made reasonable progress, particularly in election administration and observation. NGO capacity to influence change increased but not to the point where NGOs are major regional players. Overall, results are proportional to the small D&G budget. Given the modest size of the program it was unrealistic to anticipate major region wide changes. See below for details in how IMPACT carried out the assessment.

SO2: The economic policy adviser prepared a summary strategy result evaluation paper titled: *Regional Market Integration Strategic Objective: 1996-2003 Strategy Assessment Summary* for RCSA. The paper reviewed the market issues identified at the start of the strategy and considered the extent to which the situation had changed over the last seven years and provided evidence of RCSA's contribution to this change. The overall assessment was that the region has become more integrated as reflected in new trade within the region, a more cohesive regional approach to international trade issues and the creation (with RCSA support) of at least seven new public-private regional institutions which are now active, established and recognized drivers in the trade, telecommunications, transport, energy and business sectors. The SO's regional institutional approach to policy and market reform intervention, with active and in-built private sector participation has created new, more effective systems for cooperation, collaboration and symbiosis in the region.

SO12: IMPACT staff worked closely with SO12 Team and a regional consultant to assess past and ongoing projects. We conducted specific assessments of both the Four Corners and Great Limpopo activities. The assessments concluded that the Great Limpopo activity was off to a very good start while Four Corners was making some progress; however, effective and sustainable community participation and in particular community based enterprises takes three-to-five years to achieve. The projects were less than three years long, far too short to firmly establish viable

community based enterprises (CBEs). With respect to Great Limpopo, it is likely that without continued support from some source most if not all of the CBEs will fail. Fortunately, at least some other donor financing seems to be forthcoming for the CBE's. Incomplete achievements of SO12 activities may leave a negative long-lasting impression of the RCSA, USAID and the implementing partners.

SO13: IMPACT completed a preliminary strategy assessment for all SO13 activities. These included: Sorghum and millet improvement program (SMIP) implemented by ICRISAT, Southern Africa Root Crops Research Network (SARRNET) implemented by IITA, Sanitary/Pytosanitary regulations implemented by HUB/RAPID, Grades and standards implemented by HUB/RAPID, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network implemented by HUB/RAPID, Famine Early Warning System Network implemented by HUB/RAPID, Heartwater Disease Control project implemented by the University of Florida and Regional Biosafety implemented by APHIS. The findings were that SO13 achieved many of its targets for the period but did not fully meet the overall objectives of the SO.

Special Objective B: Creation of Capacity for More Informed Regional Decision Making

RCSA designed SPO-B to explore the nature of analytical capacity needs, outline possible interventions, and, if appropriate, develop a strategic framework for the Creation of Capacity for More Informed Regional Decision Making. Phase 1 of the Special Objective, which established RCSA's performance monitoring system, proceeded as expected. IMPACT and RCSA completed the PMP in July 1999. Data collection, analysis and review systems started immediately. The initial process was successful and short-term milestones achieved but, following further review of the rationale and prospects of this result, the mission concluded that this objective has little chance of achieving sustained and significant impact with the resources likely to be available.

Details

The purpose of the special objective was to create a regional capacity to produce and disseminate timely and relevant analytical information to meet regional decision-making needs. RCSA structured Special Objective B as the mission's analytical capacity building vehicle, addressing both monitoring/ evaluation and analytical needs. Shortage of regional information and analytical resources is a serious impediment to effective regional policy making. There are vast differences in data-collection and analytical capabilities among countries. The general approach of aggregating existing country-specific data and treat it as regional data frequently fails to provide a comprehensive picture of the region as a whole. For example, several countries with large informal employment sectors do not capture the importance of the informal sector, in their gross domestic product figures. Because of such information gaps, southern African decision makers lack the tools for sound policy-making based on clearly identified needs and realities of the region. The special objectives attempted to create such regional capacity by: 1) strengthening the capacity of selected institutions in the region to provide regional analyses/assessments relating to policies and their impacts on economic growth, regional integration and socio-economic trends; and 2) mobilizing the existing potential for information-based decision making

through a strengthened network of users and producers of analytical information, and 3) strengthening decision-making structures to utilize this analytical information in regional decision making.

Through IMPACT the regions decision makers developed an analytical agenda in November 1999. RCSA enhanced its program performance through analytical reports produced by IMPACT. These reports helped to inform strategy implementation and prospects for achievement of results. IMPACT assisted partners implementing the RCSA strategy in developing M&E plans, which are consistent with the RCSA PMP. DG performance data was assessed and more relevant indicators designed. IMPACT supported the design process for the new SO3 and SO4. IMPACT collected regional data on regional market integration. The African Decision Makers Round Table held in November 1999 reinforced in phase II the initial regional analytical agenda set by Southern African Policy Makers in economic sectors including trade, finance, and investment. As a baseline, 50% of surveyed (Dec 2000) senior decision makers in trade, investment, commerce, transport and agriculture sectors from nine countries in the region reported a significant increase in the utilization of information over the previous year. IMPACT introduced a quarterly, the *Regional EconReview*, which circulated among regional economic decision makers. This publication reviews available regional and international research and analyses on issues pertinent to market integration. However, efforts to develop partnership between selected regional organizations and US centers of excellence were constrained by the unreadiness of the prospective regional partners to endeavour in this area. Consequently, SPO-B did not achieve the expected partnerships.

Although SPO B achieved several milestones, RCSA decided at the end of FY 1999 that prospects for sustainable impact under this objective were insufficient because: 1) SADC Secretariat had not shown a commitment to an earlier expression that this is a priority for the region; and 2) analytical institutions are not ready at this juncture to partner with RCSA and US institutions to develop a regional data center. RCSA therefore eliminated this objective from its results framework while integrating much of the RCSA internal analytical agenda into the IMPACT activity.

V. Methodology

RCSA is very interested in the methodology the project applied, so a narrative outlining the methodology is given below.

➤ SO1. D&G organization surveys

From the beginning of the IMPACT project, the IMPACT team has measured the progress of the various NGOs who received grants from RCSA using the DG Practitioners' and the Regional Capacity Tool Surveys. The DG Practitioners' survey measures DG Practitioners' perceptions of the effectiveness SO1 funded organizations in doing DG work. The Regional Capacity Tool is a self-assessment used by SO1 partners to measure organizational capacity in areas regarded as critical to effective performance at regional level. The tool uses a three-point scale. The NGOs

select from one to three persons who they work with but are not part of NGO itself to assess their progress. Overall, results indicate gradual improvement in partner competence, an improvement supported by observations of improved performance. We cross check the results against the perceptions of actual performance by political scientists working in the region, by the perceptions of the RCSA D&G officer, and our own perceptions. The conclusions from the cross checking was that improvements in institution capacity brought parallel improvements in substantive performance. The experts also agreed that the self-assessment judgements were accurate. After using the instrument through three cycles we also concluded that while the NGOs were improving their organizational capacity the self assessment was becoming increasingly more critical in their judgements so that actual scores were remaining stable and not improving. In particular, the three-point scale seemed too tight to reflect changes.

Thus, when RCSA requested IMPACT conducted an end of strategy survey of NGOs receiving grants from RCSA during the course of the concluding strategic period we changed the approach somewhat while maintaining the basic methodology. First, because of the limited time available in which to do the survey we decided upon a structured interview approach. That is someone from the IMPACT team would interview each grantee asking the same questions. They would then record the answers. The interviewers were also free to explore the answers from the NGOs. The questions probed both the NGOs program and capacity and their view of D&G in the region. Finally, we asked the NGOs to rate themselves on a ten-point scale, (10 being world class, 5 being competent, and 1 being incomplete.) Second, we limited the interviews to organizations that had a grant for two or more years. Fifteen organizations in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe participated. Most of the NGOs rated themselves between six and seven on most areas. Again, we used political scientists from the region to cross check the ratings against their own perceptions. Again, while they disagreed on a few of the ratings overall they thought the self-assessments by the NGOs were accurate and readily defensible. Third, we initially anticipated that the interviews would take approximately one hour. We found the NGOs greatly appreciated IMPACT taking the time to interview them, and that they were eager to expound on their views and achievements. Thus, most of the interviews took about two hours. After completion of the interview and the drafting of the report, each NGO received a copy of the completed report for its comments. About half of them provided comments asking for modest factual changes. All stated that IMPACT accurately recorded their comments.

The NGO believe that the RCSA grants improved their competence and institutional capacity and that they were sustaining their improvement. Observation of performance supports that view. Only three NGOs have current grants and most of the NGOs are continuing to perform effectively. The NGOs also stated that without the RCSA grant they would not have been able to provide the services they provide or perform as well. Most hoped that RCSA, in its new strategy would play an active role in facilitating improved communication and networking between the D&G NGOs.

➤ *SO2 Data collection process*

SO2 presented the need for another type of data and hence different methodology. That is IMPACT needed to provide timely basic economic and trade data to test whether the

interventions sponsored by RCSA were working. For this IMPACT used a network of regional firms and consultants with extensive contacts with national level Ministries of Finance, Commerce, Customs, etc. Through this network, we were often able to secure the data well before the Ministries published it. Then it was a matter of aggregating the data to obtain regional figure. The result was that IMPACT was able to show that since the start of AGOA, and the RCSA funded HUB, both international and regional trade had increased.

➤ *SO12 Data collection process and end of strategy reports*

Data collection methodology for SO12 was to review reports from implementing partners and then interview SO team members. We periodically spot-checked the activity report data with field visits.

➤ *SO13 Data collection and special report*

Data collection methodology for SO13 involved carrying out household and industrial surveys with SMIP and SARRNET. In addition, we did a major study to verify claimed yields with actual yields. We also used data provided by RAPID. All data sources were periodically subject to ground truthing.

➤ *PMP preparation*

SO2 provides an excellent example of how IMPACT worked closely with the SO team to prepare a mission useful PMP that also meets Washington's requirements. In preparing PMPs the IMPACT team works closely with both the SO team and the activity implementers. Illustrative of this process is the Southern African Global Competitiveness Hub, which in mid 2003 was realigning its core work to achieve the strategic result of building export competitiveness in the region. To this end, they have been revising their work plan and monitoring and evaluation plan to reflect this change. IMPACT's economic policy adviser provided detailed comments on the draft PMP to guide the review of the Hub PMP and work plan as per RCSA's Hub COTR request. We submitted detailed comments to the Hub COTR at RCSA. The IMPACT COP and economic policy adviser discussed these comments in depth at a meeting at the Hub on Wednesday 29th October 2003. RCSA accepted most of the recommendations with the CTO stating that they made the PMP more realistic and results-oriented for the remaining 10-month delivery time.

➤ *Data Quality Assessments*

IMPACT makes a point of periodically reviewing the quality of its data against the needs of RCSA. The following illustrates several aspects of this process. For example, in the third quarter of FY 2001 Joseph Mwangi, Deputy Chief of Party, and Roy Thompson, Consultant, assessed the data quality and indicators of the agriculture strategic objective. Mr. Thompson is a highly regarded agriculture statistician from Malawi. They visited SMIP and SARRNET (key partners of the agriculture SO) headquarters and their activities in Malawi, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. The purpose was to spot check the existing data collection processes as part of a data

quality assessment and hold discussions with users and providers of information. Because of the exercise, IMPACT gathered enough information to facilitate completion of worksheets provided by the PMP guidebook. The survey confirmed that the data trail, that is collection of the original data in farmers' fields up to its ultimate designation with RCSA, maintained international standards of integrity. The conclusions of the survey team were that the implementation teams were collecting appropriate data, that the data is both accurate and reliable, and that analysis by the grantees was accurate. The data trail was well secured and maintained standards of integrity. No contamination occurred. The survey team also confirmed that the costs of collecting the data were well below CDIE guidelines.

A recommendation of the Program office/IMPACT team retreat of May 10, 2001 was for IMPACT to contract with a consultant to review RCSA's procedures against the guidance and requirements of USAID/Washington, assess RCSA's compliance with the requirements and recommend an action program to move forward. IMPACT also asked the consultant to review the adequacy of the data and the analysis being used to track progress in the RCSA program.

IMPACT contracted with Diane Blane, retired USAID/Albania Mission Director, to conduct the review. Ms. Blane conducted the review from September 10 to September 21, 2001. She interviewed acting Mission Director Annette Adams, all SO teams, most SO team members, all of the IMPACT staff, all Program Office staff, the staff of the SOS office, and the Chiefs of Party of RAPID and STRENGTH.

Ms. Blane concluded that RCSA policies and procedures comply with those of USAID/Washington and that RCSA's policies and procedures are not overly burdensome. Ms. Blane also concluded that the data IMPACT collects to monitor the RCSA program is of reasonable quality and fully meets the needs of the monitoring program. She also noted that the costs of collecting this data are well within the CDIE guidelines for data collection costs. During the course of Ms. Blane's interviews several offices and SO teams expressed concern over the slowness of the RCSA activity design and approval process. Ms. Blane offered several recommendations for improving this process.

- *Indicator selection - how did we work with the SO teams to select and or change indicators, targets, etc.*

Illustrative of how IMPACT works with strategic objective teams to develop indicators is our work with USAID/Mozambique. The mission first requested IMPACT to work with the D&G team in early 2003. Later the Mission expanded the request to include all of the mission's strategic objectives.

The first step was to clearly understand what the strategic objective team is trying to achieve, how it believes it can achieve this, and the context in which implementation activities takes place. An accurate knowledge of the time available is essential. In Mozambique that meant in depth discussions with the SO team and further discussions with other donors about their programs and objectives in the same sector. It also meant a thorough review of the documents so that IMPACT had a clear view of the political context, knowledge of why the SO team had

decided to work on developing municipal government, and what the intended end strategy results.

Then IMPACT worked with the team to develop a results framework that was internally consistent, and logically showed how the activities fit together to reach the end points desired by the SO team. We also prepared a narrative explaining, in our view, what steps the SO team needed to complete to reach their objectives. The narrative included recommendations of what difficulties to anticipate and how to overcome those problems. In particular, we stressed the need for recognizing the strengths and limitations of the USAID system.

On that basis, IMPACT was prepared to discuss what indicators were appropriate for each stage of the process. Discussions with the SO team were very productive so that by the end of the TDY, USAID/Mozambique had reached agreement on an overall action plan, indicators, and a PMP that put it altogether in a mission useful format. USAID/Mozambique sent the Director of RCSA an e-mail complementing the IMPACT team for its outstanding work. Even more, they requested IMPACT to return to Mozambique to work with the other SO teams to do the same thing.

VI. Disposition of used project property

Aurora submitted to RCSA an inventory of all non-expendable property under the custody of the project in Botswana and requested RCSA's authorization for the disposition of these used office equipment and household effects. Aurora discussed the disposition options with the Contracting Officer and the CTO, and made recommendations to RCSA to donate some of the office equipment (computers, desks, etc.) to U.S. Government-funded projects currently operating in Botswana under contract with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), as these projects worked to achieve the same goals as RCSA's activities in the region. A list of office equipment requested by the CDC contractors and CDC's authorization to receive these items also were submitted to RCSA. On June 28, 2004, the Contracting Officer advised Aurora that RCSA "had not yet reached a decision on final disposition of the office furniture, office equipment and vehicle" and asked Aurora to deliver the items to the RCSA's warehouse in Gaborone. Accordingly, Aurora delivered the items to the warehouse. All other property was auctioned. Aurora submitted a list of all property auctioned along with two checks toward payment of the proceeds from the auctions to RCSA's Controller and requested that the funds be credited to the contract.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED BY IMPACT PROJECT

Date	Workshop Title	Venue	Category of Participants	No. of participants
November 9-10, 1999	Gender sensitive monitoring and reporting for key partners	Johannesburg, RSA	USAID Bilateral Missions and RCSA Regional Partners	26
February 17-19, 1999	Managing for results for partners	Gaborone, Botswana	RCSA staff and partners	50
November 5-6, 1999	Policy makers roundtable	Johannesburg, RSA	Regional heads of reserve banks, permanent secretaries and other policy makers	32
March 6-7, 2000	SO3/ SO4 PMP development workshop	Gaborone, Botswana	SO3/SO4 Team members, Program Office staff and IMPACT staff	12
March 9-10, 2000	SO1 mid term methodological review	Mokolodi, Botswana	SO3/SO4 Team members, Program Office staff and IMPACT staff	9
January 29-31, 2001	SO1 partner's results workshop	USAID, Gaborone	Regional partners implementing DG activities, Bilateral Missions DG Officers and SO1 staff	43
July 30- Aug 3, 2001	IUCN-ROSA/ IMPACT management practices workshop for IUCN partners	Gaborone, Botswana	IUCN core and Partner staff	42
July 22-23, 2002	Strategy review and results monitoring for SO1 partners	Gaborone, Botswana	Regional partners implementing DG activities and SO1 staff	30
September 2002	Joint AWF/ IMPACT workshop	Kasane, Botswana	AWF and IMPACT technical staff	9
September 11, 2002	Economic focus group	Chemonics, Gaborone	Regional economists, trade and infrastructure specialists	23
September 17, 2002	NRM focus group	Gaborone	Regional environment and natural resource specialists	18
September 19, 2002	Agric focus group	Gaborone	Regional agriculture specialists	20
November 12-14, 2003	Program directions and regional services conference	Johannesburg, RSA	RCSA, REDSO, USAID Washington technical advisers and Bilateral Mission Directors and Program Staff	52

APPENDIX 2

IMPACT - LIST OF REPORTS

TITLE	DATE
1. DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE REPORTS	
Effectiveness Of DG Program Survey Report	June 2004
Assessment D&G Strategic Objective (SO-001) Program	November 2003
D&G Practitioner's Survey Report	February 2002
D&G Strategy Review And Results Workshop	July 2002
Report Of Data Quality Assessment	November 2001
Sabanews Content Analysis Report Volume 1	January 2001
Management Practices For IUCN Partners Workshop Report	August 2001
D&G Partners Results Workshop	January 2001
Report On The Proposed Modifications To The SO1 Results Framework	June 2000
D&G Practitioners Survey Report	December 2000
SO1 Mid Term methodological Review Workshop Report	March 2000
Report On The Beneficiary Survey Data Analysis	December 1999
D&G Practitioners Survey Report	December 1999
"A Measure Of The capacity To Influence National Democratic Performance"	September 1999
Managing For Results & Results Review Workshop For Partners Report	February 1999
Gender – Sensitive Monitoring And Reporting Regional Workshop Report	November 1999
Report Of The Beneficiary Survey Data Analysis	November 1998
2. NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS	
Four-Corners Lesson Learnt	June 2004
SO12 Strategy Assessment	December 2003
SO12 Strategy Assessment Summary	December 2003
Great Limpopo Activity Assessment	December 2003
EDDI Activity Assessment	December 2003
SO12 Semi-Annual Review	November 2003
Great Limpopo Engagement index	February 2003
SO12 Semi-Annual Review	October 2002
ZIMOZA – Performance Monitoring Checklist -	September 2002
NETCAB MANAGEMENT PRACTICES REPORT	August 2002
4-Corners Performance Monitoring Checklist	July 2002
4-Corners Priority Action List	July 2002
4-Corners Revised PMP	July 2002
4-Corners M&E Framework	June 2002
Great Limpopo – ME Framework	June 2002
Great Limpopo – Performance Monitoring Checklist	June 2002
NETCAB _PMP_ COMMENTS	August 2000
NETCAB PMP Alignment	August 2000

TITLE	DATE
3. AGRICULTURE REPORTS	
Food Security Survey report-final	January 2004
SARB indicators – comments by JM	April 2003
FANRPAN Report 28 Feb 03	February 003
SMIP Impact Report	February 2003
SARRNET impact report 070202	February 2002
SARRNET R4 data comments	March 2001
SMIP Achievements Feb 2001	February 2001
SO13 SARR 7200	July 2000
4. WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING MATERIALS	
Introduction to Managing For Results	July 2002
Introduction to Results Frameworks	July 2002
M&E Concepts and Roles	August 2001
Participatory M&E Workshop Abstract	August 2000
Gender Workshop Report	March 2000